

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EUR-12 EB-07 COME-00
LAB-04 SIL-01 NEA-10 AGR-05 INT-05 /105 W
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R 100810Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6774
INFO AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0624

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV PINT ELAB ECON MPOL UR SE MP
SUBJECT: MAURITIUS WEEKLY REVIEW - JUNE 10, 1977

REF: PORT LOUIS 0602

SUMMARY: PORT LOUIS 0623 PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF THIS CABLE.
END SUMMARY.

1. IN A SPEECH ON JUNE 5 PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM PROMISED THAT HE WOULD HOLD A REFERENDUM BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR -- PROBABLY IN OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER -- ON WHETHER MAURITIUS SHOULD BECOME A REPUBLIC. HE WONDERED WHETHER THIS CHANGE IS REALLY NECESSARY, BUT PROMISED THAT THE VERDICT OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE RESPECTED. HE NOTED THAT KENYATTA HAD TOLD HIS A COUNTRY COULD NOT BE REALLY INDEPENDENT UNLESS IT WAS A REPUBLIC, BUT HE CLAIMED THAT MAURITIUS UNDER A MONARCHY IS MORE INDEPENDENT THAN KENYA, FRANCE OR ANY OTHER REPUBLIC.

2. L'EXPRESS OF JUNE 4 REPORTED THAT RAMGOOLAM HAS ACCEPTED A SOVIET INVITATION TO LEAD A MAURITIAN DELEGATION TO THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION NEXT
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NOVEMBER. DELEGATIONS REPRESENTING THE LABOR PARTY AND THE MMM WILL ALSO ATTEND, AS WILL REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER MAURITIAN ORGANIZATIONS.

3. AT A MEETING WITH THE NATIONAL TRADE UNION FRONT, FINANCE MINISTER RINGADOO SAID HE AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER RAISING SALARIES AND WAGES TO COMPENSATE FOR RISES IN THE COST OF LIVING THIS

YEAR. HIS ATTITUDE WAS DESCRIBES AS PRSITIVE BY THE TRADE UNION LEADERS AS WELL AS THE MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM) PARTY.

4. AN EDITORIAL IN THE MAY 31 LE MILITANT SUMMED UP THE RESULTS OF THE MMM PARTY CONFERENCE OF TWO DAYS EARLIER AS A DECISION TO EMPAHSIZE MOBILIZATION OF WORKING CLASS SUPPORT FOR THE PARTY AND A LESSER CONCENTRATION ON APPEALS TO THE BOURGEOISIE TO SUPPORT THE PARTY, A COURSE WHICH HAD BEEN NECESSITATED BY THE ELECTIONOS. ALSO, THE EFFORT TO ATTRACT THE LEFT WING OT THE LABOR PARTY INTO A COALITION OR OTHER ARRANGEMENT WITH THE MMM WILL BE ABANDONED AND THE PARTY WILL FIGHT ALONE IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS. COMMENT: THESE DECI-SIONS WILL BE SEEN AS A VICTORY BY THE LEFT-WING IDEOLOGICAL "PURISTS" WHO ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE A MAJORITY ON THE MMM CENTRAL COMMITTEE. END COMMENT.

5. LE MILITANT OF JUNE 1 PUBLISHED THE FULL TEXT OF THE TRACT DISTRIBUTED AT THE RECENT LABOR PARTY CONGRESS BY THE BOOLELL WING. THE TRACT BITTERLY ATTACKS THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PARTY, PARTICULARLY THE PERFORMANCE OF SECRETARY GENERAL JAGATSINGH AND HIS AIDES, AND SAYS THE PARTY HEADQUARTERS IS A SHAMEFUL "GAMBLING DEN."

6. THE MMM CRITICIZED THE DECISION TO ADJOURN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY UNTIL OCTOBER 18, THAT IS, FOR MORE THAN FOUR MONTHS. THE MMM SAYS THIS IS WASTEFUL, AS WELL AS NEGLECTFUL OF THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS.

7. LE MILITANT OF JUNE 4 PUBLISHED AN EDITORIAL CARRYING ANOTHER CATEGORIC DENIAL THAT THERE IS ANY POSSIBILITY OF A MMM-LABOR COALITION GOVERNMENT. THE PAPER SAID THE PARTY WILL CONCENTRATE ON CONFIDENTIAL

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MASS ORGANIZATION AND MOBILIZATION TOWARD THE AIM OF WINNING THE NEXT ELECTIONS AGAINST THE LABOR-PMSD ALLIANCE.

8. THE GOVERNMENT HAS MAINTAINED SILENCE ON THE SYECHELLES COUP. ACTING PRIME MINISTER BOOLELL, RESPONDING TO PRESS QUERIES, SAID THE SITUATION IS STILL FLUID AND THE GOM IS WAITING FOR THE INTERNAL SITUATION THERE TO BE CLARIFIED BEFORE TAKING A POSITION. ACCORDING TO L'EXPRESS, BOOLELL HAS INSTRUCTED MEMBERS OF THE CABINET AND ASSEMBLY NOT TO COMMENT ON THE SITUATION IN THE SYECHELLES, IN ORDER NOT TO AFFECT ADVERSELY FUTURE RELATIONS WITH THAT COUNTRY. THE PAPER ALSO REPORTED THAT SINCE SUNDAY SPECIAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN AT CERTAIN KEY POINTS IN MAURITIUS.

9. THE MMM ORGAN, LE MILITANT, WAS NOT SO SHY CONCERNING THE COUP. AN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "THE SYECHELLES TURN TO THE LEFT," WELCOMED THE COUP, BLAMED IT ALL ON MANCHAM, DENIED THERE WAS ANY RUSSIAN INVOLVEMENT (THE PAPER SAID RENE'S SPUP HAS ALWAYS BEEN CLOSER TO TANZANIA AND ALGERIA THAN TO THE USSR, ABOUT WHICH IT HAS HAD "RESER-VATIONS"), AND SAID MANCHAM'S MISRULE HAD MADE IT INEVITABLE. LE

MILITANT WELCOMED THIS "MOVE TO THE LEFT" IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, COMING AFTER SIMLAR SHIFTS IN MADAGASCAR, THE COMOROS, MOZAMBIQUE AND ANGOLA. AFTER THE VICTORY BY THE LEFT IN FRANCE, REUNION WILL BE LEFTIST, AND THIS MOVEMENT WILL NOT STOP AT THE REEFS OF MAURITIUS, THE PAPER CONCLUDED.

10. MMM SECRETARY GENERAL BERENGER, WHO IS CLOSE PERSONALLY TO RENE, SPOKE TO THE PRESS IN TERMS VERY SIMILAR TO THE ABOVE EDITORIAL, INDICATING HE HAD AUTHORED IT. HE CLAIMED HE WAS AWARE OF MANCHAM'S PLANS TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION AND POSTPONE THE ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR 1979. MMM SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTER DE L'ESTRAC PRAISED THE COUP AS WELL AND SAID IT WAS MOTIVATED BY THE WISH TO PERSERVE DEMOCRACY IN THE SEYCHELLES.

11. AFP REPORTED THAT BERENGER MADE A BRIEF STOP IN THE SYECHELLES ON JUNE 6, WAS MET BY THREE MEMBERS OF THE NEW CABINET, WHO TOOK HIM TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS TO MEET WITH THE NEW SEYCHELLES LEADERSHIP. CONFIDENTIAL

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BERENGER IS CLOSE TO THE NEW SEYCHELLES LEADER, ALBERT RENE, AND PARTIES ARE IDEOLOGICAL ALLIES. THE SEYCHELLES STOPOVER WAS THE FIRST PART OF A TWO-WEEK TRIP THAT WILL TAKE BERENGER TO BRITAIN AND FRANCE WHERE THE PRESS SAYS HE WILL CONTACT THE LABOR AND SOCIALIST- COMMUNIST PARTIES RESPECTIVELY, AS WELL AS LAGERIA, TANZANIA AND MADAGASCAR.

12. THE USS STERETT AND USNS MISPILLION VISITED PORT LOUIS JUNE 3-6. PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM, DURING A COURTESY CALL BY REAR ADMIRAL F. H. MILLER, EXPRESS UNEASINESS OVER WHAT HE TERMED THE "AMERICAN ABANDONMENT" OF THE AREA AND THE CONCURRENT INCREASED SOVIET PRESENCE. THE SHIPS' OFFICERS AND PERSONNEL WERE RECEIVED FAVORABLY AND WELL BY GOM OFFICIALS, AS WELL AS BY THE LOCAL PRESS.

13. ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, THE GOVERNMENT AUTHORIZED ANOTHER INCREASE IN BUS FARES, WHICH WILL RISE 10 CENTS NEXT WEEK. THIS WAS CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN THE 100 PERCENT INCREASE ASKED BY THE BUS COMPANIES, BUT THE MOVE WILL NOT MAKE CONSUMERS HAPPY. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO TAKEN ONVER ONE BANKRUPT BUS COMPANY, AND HAS APPOINTED A STUDY COMMISSION TO LOOK INTO THE WHOLE PROBLEM OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT. THE MMM, WHICH HAS CALLED FOR NATIONALIZATION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT, HAS NATURALLY CRITIZED THE GOVERNMENT'S CAUTION. THE GOVERNMENT MAY BE FORCED TO NATIONALIZE AS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THIS TROUBLED ECONOMIC SECTOR. RAMGOOLAM HAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED HIS POSITION ON NATIONALIZATION AS FAVORING IT ONLY WHEN APPLIED TO SECTORS WHICH ARE HAVING SERIOUS ECONOMIC DEFFICULTIES, BUT DEFINITELY NOT TO "EFFICIENT" SECTORS SUCH AS THE SUGAR INDUSTRY.

14. ELECTRICITY PRICES WILL BE RAISED AN AVERAGE OF 35 PERCENT EFFECTIVE JUNE 16. CONSUMERS DID NOT RECEIVE ONLY BAD NEWS THIS WEEK, HOWEVER, FOR FAVORABLE GROWING CONDITIONS HAVE REDUCED

THE PRICES OF FRESH VEGETABLES DRASTICALLY.
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Message Attributes

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